Walkin’ in Sunshine: *The Joy of No Electricity Bill*



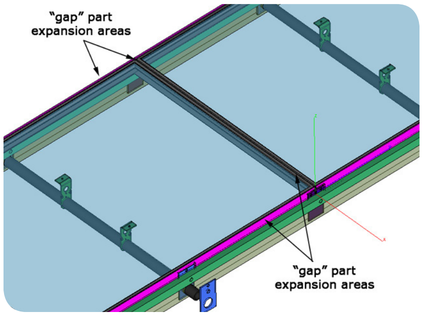
Martin Brunt finds huge satisfaction as a solar designer in helping people tie into the utility grid, and not only cut their electricity bills, but sell power back to the utility company. He is on the forefront of designing and building prefabricated solar arrays for dual-use carports, canopies and awnings that harness the power of the sun while at the same time provide shade below, and minimize any compromise to the roofing envelope. He’s been an Ashlar-Vellum software user for almost 20 years. Cobalt™ CAD and 3D modeling software has helped him solve a number of design problems across the industries in which he’s been a part.

For example, Brunt has a unique way of designing gap tolerances necessary with a number of materials. Awhile back, while struggling with the tolerances on a stainless steel cabinet he had an epiphany, suddenly realizing that in Cobalt the gap could be a parametric part. Instead of over-thinking everything, trying to go from the part forward, Brunt started designing all the gap tolerances to be a gap of air. The air itself was designated as a solid. This became critical when he later began designing solar array systems with their inherent issues of expansion and contraction where glass must be able to float. Says Brunt, “It was a very powerful design feature that I don’t think a lot of people use.”

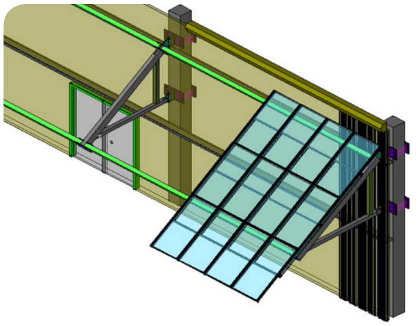
Cobalt is also helping Brunt and the solar electric contractor for which he designs. By developing pre-fabricated solar systems they can eliminate a huge amount of the labor necessary to install a system on a roof. Brunt uses Cobalt for everything including the design and engineering of each system, as well as the drawings for the permit process. He also finds Cobalt a very useful tool to minimize the site labor necessary for installing solar since roof-top conditions are not optimal for safety.

Brunt feels Cobalt is an especially ideal product for small businesses doing specialty products who want to control the process and automate it as much as possible. Not only did he learn to use it in three days, he started making money with it in the first week. Brunt tells us,

“I started seeing all the things I could do with Cobalt. From there on out I forced myself to do things in 3D…I’ve always made money with Cobalt.”

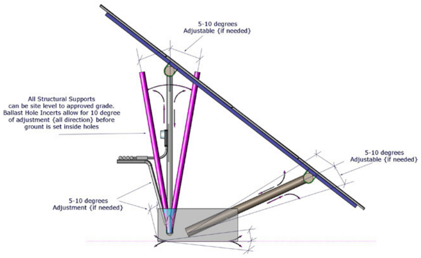


Brunt uses Cobalt CAD and 3D models to create gap tolerances as parametric parts.





Cobalt facilitates the design, engineering, and permitting discussions of solar arrays.



Background/Contact

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